

When Was Welsh Literature First Written Down?

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§1. It is today widely held that the Cynfeirdd poems—even if some of them were composed as early as the sixth and seventh centuries—cannot possibly have entered the manuscript tradition until the ninth or tenth. This view has in turn given rise to the influential hypothesis of a *purely oral* transmission as long as two or three centuries. There has never been any direct evidence favouring these concepts or precluding the alternative possibility that some of our surviving texts could go back to written originals of the sixth or seventh century.¹ Until recently, this alternative was very difficult to assess, because we had no adequate notion of what sort of orthographic standard would have been used at that early period for recording extensive pieces of the vernacular. A vigorous Romano-British spelling tradition was persisting at c.600 for isolated native proper names in Latin epitaphs on monumental stonework. For example, CATACVS HIC FILIVS TEGERNACVS,² though betraying the loss of Britt. case inflexion, shows name forms which would be altogether appropriate to documents of the Roman Period or even on coin legends of the pre-Roman Iron Age. Even an example like *Catamanus*,³ though showing late features, is more accurately characterized as *Ultimate Romano-British* rather than *Early Old Welsh* or the like. Such examples lead us to consider the possibility that a lengthy lag followed the emergence of Neo-Britt. speech before the complex of attendant drastic changes in sound pattern and syllable structure came to be reflected in spelling. If the case was such, this would mean that there had been no contemporary Neo-Britt. orthographic system in the lifetimes of Taliesin and Neirin and perhaps that Neo-Britt. was not a written language until we find it so in surviving OW and OB manuscripts of the late eighth or early ninth centuries. Such a conclusion would of course rule out any written transmission of Welsh literature before c.800.

In *Studia Celtica* viii/ix (12, 19, *et passim*), Kenneth Jackson said that British clergy must have extensively written native names in their Neo-Britt. (as opposed to Rom.-Brit.) forms as early as the sixth century, which would mean (according to his own chronology) more or less immediately after Neo-Britt. first came into existence after the apocope. This would also mean that CATACVS, TEGERNACVS, *Catamanus*, etc.—which can hardly be regarded as written in Neo-Britt. form—were anachronisms belonging to a special conservative tradition which coexisted with an innovative tradition in use on perishable media, so that one would expect to find in contemporary manuscripts forms more like OWB *Catōc*, OB *Tiarnōc* (CR cxxxv, AD 814), and OW *Catman* (*Vita Cadoci*, VSB 128, §57; Gwynedd genealogy in Harl. 3859). One may compare the situation of Ogam Ir. versus the earliest manuscript Ir. as these are today believed to have coexisted in the later sixth century. In the *SC* article, Jackson offered no evidence of this practice nor any inference as to how the earliest

written language would have agreed with or differed from the OW and OB of the ninth century. Of course, any direct testimony (or even a well-supported reconstruction) of the orthographic system in use in the so-called 'Primitive WCB' period would be of the first importance, both in elucidating the common origins of the cognate OW, OB, and OC systems and re-evaluating the possibility of early texts of Hengerdd. Since Jackson wrote, his idea has been confirmed by Wendy Davies's work on the Llandaff charters, which she has shown to be—rather than a uniform creation of the era of the manuscript—a heavily edited compilation of many older texts closely datable over a more or less continuous span from the mid sixth century to the late eleventh.⁴ As Davies has shown on non-linguistic grounds, the witness lists of most charters can be counted as going back to the nuclear authentic texts. When the orthography of the several hundred Welsh personal names in these lists is considered, it is seen that a complete and systematic modernization was never effected. Thus, we find in sixth- and seventh-century lists orthographic features which we can see die out in the eighth, features continuing through the eighth century to die out in the ninth, and so on. The dated sequence of names makes it possible to undo many of the modernizations and corruptions that have crept in and to reconstruct with relative confidence what the orthographic standard had been at any given point in the sequence.

The linguistic implications of this have now only been presented in an admittedly preliminary fashion by Davies herself in an article entitled 'The Orthography of the Personal Names in the Charters of *Liber Landavensis*', *BBCS* xxviii/4 (1980), 553–7. I believe that what was said in that article was sound; so what follows is an elaboration upon it with fuller presentation of examples and *comparanda*, rather than a critique or revision of it. As seen in the review of the material below, the evidence permits several important observations and conclusions:

(i) The spelling of the later sixth and seventh centuries did not differ drastically from that of ninth-century OW (or OBC). Most of the differences reflect actual sound changes as opposed to innovations in orthographic practice.

(ii) The spelling system which was still in use in funerary monuments (e.g. CATACVS HIC FILIVS TEGERNACVS) must indeed be counted as belonging to an anachronistic tradition when compared with the contemporary manuscript forms reflected in the charters. We do not see late Rom.-Brit. spelling gradually and uniformly evolving into early OWCB spelling over the course of the seventh and eighth centuries; rather, a fully developed Neo-Britt. writing system makes its revolutionary appearance in the second half of the sixth century and therefore coexisted for some time with an archaizing, Latinate tradition.

(iii) At this early period, most of the sound changes which allow us to distinguish ninth-century OW from contemporary OBC had not yet arisen (or were not yet recognized in the spelling). The one possible exception known to me is the treatment of the common personal-name element 'iron' which usually appears as OB *-hoiarn*, pretonic *ƿarn-*, OW *haern*, *haiarn*, etc. The usual spelling in *Lib. Lan.* (and the Llancarfan charters) is *hearn*, which could well reflect an archaic pre-diphthongized form [he:|árn], common ancestor of *hoiarn* and *haiarn*. So the written language attested in the oldest Llandaff charter lists can fairly be regarded as the pre-dialectal ancestor of OWCB going

back to the era of the founding of the great monastic houses of Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany, the so-called 'Age of Saints' when a pan-Brittonic learned class was in place. Therefore, it would be accurate to term this written language *Archaic (Common) Neo-Brittonic*, rather than *Early Old Welsh*, on the basis of geographical provenance alone.

(iv) In *CA* and *CT/PT*, several of the corruptions disfiguring the surviving texts can be accounted for on the assumption of exemplars in an orthography like that of the sixth- and seventh-century lists in which *u-* or *uu-* was used for OW *gu-*, MW *gw-*, *e* was written for OW *ui*, *oi*, *oe*, MW *wy*, and *o* written for OW *au*, MW *aw*. These criteria of archaism are comparable to confusion of *o* and *úa*, *e* and *ía* in Ir. manuscripts whose traditions go back to the period and style of spelling of the Cambrai Homily.

§2. In her *BBCS* article, Davies identifies three features of the early witness lists which reflect the phonology of the Pr.W period. A full accounting recognized by the present writer in each category is provided in this section, most of which are relatively free from doubt. However, one possible source of uncertainty is the use of *u* in Archaic Neo-Britt. tonic syllables representing the long vowel which usually later broke into the OW diphthong *au*: e.g. *Vita Cadoci (VC)* where both *Gunliuc* and *Gundliauc* occur for *Gwynlliog*, also *VC* §67 and *Lib. Lan.* 180b which record the same early eighth-century grant and have *Merchiun* and *Merchion* respectively for later OW *Merchiaun* < Lat. *Marcianus*. Thus, *Conmur* in *Lib. Lan.* charter 199bi and *Conmor* in 198b, both c.720–55, represent the same individual and more probably correspond to MW *Kynvawr* than to the unknown *Cynfwr* or *Cynfur*. The approximate dates are taken from the index and pp. 93–130 of *Llandaff Charters*. Macrons are supplied so that *ō* whence OW *au*, MW *aw*, and *ē* whence OW *oi*, *ui*, MW *wy*, may be distinguished from the historically short vowels denoted by the same grapheme.

Appended to (ii) and (iii) below are collected archaisms of like type occurring in the fragmentary Cartulary of Lllancarfan appended to *Vita Cadoci* (§§55–68 = Wade-Evans, *VSB* 124–36). Many of these charters can be drawn into Davies's Llandaff scheme by persons occurring in both series. The criteria of my dating are summarized in the footnotes. Davies (*Early Welsh Microcosm*, 3) concludes that the Lllancarfan group derives from originals of the seventh and eighth centuries. As far as I have been able to determine, those charters which are supposedly oldest are §57 and §58 which have Cadoc and his Irish associates, Finnian Scottus (§57) and Macmoil prior (§58), as witnesses and would therefore go back to the mid or later sixth century. The authenticity of these is doubtful; two witnesses in §57 (*Eutegyrn lector* and *Cethij*) are probably the same individuals that occur in the mid-seventh-century charters, where their names occur in more archaic spellings: *Cethig* (§65), *Catthig*, *Outegurn* (§68). The latest datable Lllancarfan charters, §55 (and by synchronization with it §56) and possibly §66, have Llandaff connections going down to c.765. The bulk of the datable material is mid seventh- to early eighth-century. Generally speaking, the proper names in the Lllancarfan group are in a more consistently archaic spelling than even the early Llandaff charters. A pre-c.750 dating can be supported both by phonological considerations as guided by the *LHEB* chronology and by datable orthographic parallels in *Lib. Lan.*; so Lllancarfan material is of particular linguistic importance.

(i) initial *U-* (or *Uu-*) for later *Gu-*.

c.605-20: Uuelbiu, 76a, = *Vueluiiu*, 160, 161, 162a, = *Vuelbiu*, 161, 162a, the same individual as *Vbeluiiu*, 72a, 77; Davies accordingly modernizes the name as *Ufelfyw*. But it is possible that *Vbeluiiu* is an error and that the name is the same as *Guelbiu*, 155, *c.675*, and in *Uilla Guilbiu*, 148, *c.688*, and *Gwylwyw* (Bartrum, *EWGT* 112. 2. a).

c.610: Uelauc, 161 (at which time the original spelling would have been **Uelōc*), cf. *Guilauc* in the genealogies in Harl. 3859.

c.610-20: Uebersel, 164, = *Guorbur*, 161, = *Guebrgur*, 162a.

(ii) final *-e* for MW *wy* [ui], OW *ui*, *oi*. At the same time, examples of internal *-e-* for later [ui] are taken.

c.575: Clēm, 72a, < Lat. *Clēmēns*, cf. *Cluim* in the Strathclyde genealogy in Harl. 3859.

c.600-25: Guordocē, 163b, = *Guordocui*, 75, 121, 164, *Gurdocui*, 77, *Gurdocoe*, 165.

c.605-25: Gurguarē, 163b, 164, = *Gurguarui*, 162b, *Guruarui*, 165.

c.620-5: Comēreg, 163b, 164, 165; another individual bore this same name in the ninth century, i.e. *Cimuiereg*, a form showing diphthongization in the second syllable and unrounding of the reduced vowel in the first, 74, 174b, *c.860*; this is the now-obsolete word MW *kyfŵyre* 'dyrchafael, rhwysg, gorawen, rising, mustering' (*Geirfa* 219; see further *CA* 118; cf. also *Atdērreg* below). The old spelling recurs; see below.

c.650-98: Oudocē episcopus (Euddogwy) occurs in a great number of the charters. Davies suggests that he is only likely to have actually witnessed those charters falling between these dates. *Eudocē* below is the same individual.

c.700: Comēreg, 176b, see above.

c.700: Louronē, 176b, = *Louonui*, 183b.

c.752: Guoruonē, 203a, v. *Guorgonui*, 221, *c.950: Guronui*, 271, 272, *c.1072-5*.

c.765: Guengalē?, 211a, ? = *Guerngalui*, 206, *c.775*.

Llancarfan: Congalē? (§60, *c.590-625?*⁵); *Atdērreg* (§60, *c.590-625?*⁵) a word closely related to *dadŵyre(in)* 'dyrchafael, atgyfodiad, etc.' (*Geirfa* 285) used as a name, cf. *Comēreg* above; *Retonē?* (§60, *c.590-625?*⁵); *Cunhapē* (§61, pre-*c.720*⁶), ? = *Canapoi* (§59, pre-*c.720*⁶); *Eudocē episcopus* (§65, *c.650* or earlier⁷); *Biunō clericus* (§65, *c.650* or earlier⁷) v. *Biunoi* (§67, *c.695-710*⁸), *Biunonoi* (§64, *c.650-65*⁹), *Beuonoe* (§68, *c.650* or earlier⁷), *Biunui laicus* (*Lib. Lan.* 74, 171b, *c.860*); *Guēdan* v. *Guoidan* (§56, *c.730-50*; see above), the diphthong might represent [ui] or [oi] (see below).

That the archaic spelling of final *-wy* is *-e* implies that the Brit. protoforms cannot have had *-owjos*. As the *-wy* termination is particularly common in the formation of river-names (e.g. *Arwy*, *Ebwy*, *Efyrnwy*, *Elwy*, *Llugwy*, *Machowwy*, *Mynwy*, *Tywy*), one should probably compare the Rom.-Brit. river-names *Verbēia* 'the (Yorkshire) Wharfe' (A. L. F. Rivet and C. Smith, *The Place-Names of Roman Britain* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1979), 493), *Arbēia* (ibid. 256), *Setēia* (ibid. 457), *Tamēia* (ibid. 465, cf. *Tawuy* (*LlDC* 15. 17, 34. 24)).

(iii) *-oc* for later OW *-auc*, MW *-awc*. Included with these are other examples of Archaic Neo-Britt. *-o-* for later OW *-au-* in tonic final syllables.

c.595: Biuōc, 166.

c.600: Merchiōn, 121, 122, ? = *Merchiōn*, 162a, *c.615*; same name as *Merchiaun*, 228, 229a, 229b, 230a, 236, 237a, *c.874-90*, 223, *c.940*, 243, 244, 246, 262, *c.980-1022*. Cf. OB *Merchiōn* (*CR* CXXVI, AD 858). The name recurs below.

c.605: Elōc, 162b; cf. *Ellōc* and *Cell Moellōc* in 'The Mothers of Irish Saints', Bartrum, *EWGT* 32-3.

c.620: Anauōc, 164, perhaps the word *enwōc* with epenthesis.

- c.650-60: *Conuonōc*?, 144, same individual as *Conuonuc*, 143.
 c.655-75: *Maiōc*?, 155, = *Maiuc*, 140.
 c.660: *Guinōc*, 143.
 c.665-75: *Friōc*, 147, 152, 155, v. *Friauc*, 246, c.1020.
 c.665-85: *Sedōc* or *Sēdōc* (if this is the word *swydd-og* < Lat. *sēdes* (*Elfen Ladin* §§30, 67)), 146, 147, 149, 154.
 c.670-80: *Conōc*, 149, 152.
 c.670-700: *Iudguallōn*, 152, = *Iudguallaun*, 176b, ? = *Iudgualōn*, 175.
 c.675: *Citōc*, 155.
 c.690: *Atōc*, 150b.
 c.690: *Cinuōc*, 150b.
 c.690: *ager Redōc*, *Tir Retōc*, 150b.
 c.700-10: *Eliōc*, 176b, 180b, = *Eleōc*, 183b; see *Elōc* above.
 c.710: *Merchiōn*, 180b, see above.
 c.720-55: *Conmōr*, 198b, 203a, = *Conuōr*, 186a, 201, = *Cunuōr*, 180a, = *Conmur*, 199bi, = *Conuur*, 201, if this represents the common name reflected in MW as *Kynfawr*. See *Cunuōr*, *Cinuōr* below.
 c.722: *Danōc*, 179c.
 c.722-33: *Iudguellōn*, 179c, = *Iudguellōn*, 186b.
 c.728: *Cunuōr*, 190a, see *Conmōr* above.
 c.740: *Cinuōr*?, 185, see *Conmōr* above.
 c.740-3: *Guenōc*, 185, 186a.
 c.745-50: *Cosōc*, 199a, = *Cossōc*, 202.
 c.745-60: *Elōc*, 202, ? = *Eliōc*, 207; see *Elōc* above.
 c.758: *Matōc*, 144, same name as *Matauc*, 76b, c.605 (which cannot have been the original spelling at that date), probably also *Matuc*, 144, c.650.
 c.770: *Merchiōn*, 209a, see above.
 c.850: *Merchiōn*, 169b, 170, see above.
Llancarfan: *Guedhōc* (§61, pre-c.720⁸); *Branōc*, *Danōc* (§62, c.665-700¹⁰) same name and man above; *Catōc* (§63 undatable); *Geintōc* (§65, c.650 or earlier⁷); *Mesiōc* (§65, c.650 or earlier⁷); *Gassōc* (§68, c.650 or earlier⁷).

§3. SOME FURTHER ARCHAISMS IN THE CHARTERS

(i) *e* for later [oi], [ai]. The name element *hearn* has already been noted (e.g. *Cunhēarn*, *Lib. Lan.* 184, c.738; *Hēarnngen*, *VC* §68, c.650 or earlier⁷). Some other possible instances are *Cunuēōn*, *Lib. Lan.* 150b, = *Conuēōn*, *Lib. Lan.* 140, 146, 149, c.655-90, with the second element corresponding to the OB *Uuoīōn*, *-uuoīōn* common in CR, cf. MW simplex *Gwiawn* (see Lloyd-Jones, *Geirfa* 676, Fleuriot, *DGVB* 73); *Rihēdl*, *Lib. Lan.* 155, 156, = *Rihoithil*, 148, = *Rioidyl*, 151b, c.675-98, if this contains the element *hoedl* < **saitlo*- 'life'; *Guidnerth*, *Lib. Lan.* 180b, 145 = *Guaidnerth*, 148, 149, 183b, = *Guēdnerth*, 176a, 176b, 180b, c.680-710, same person as *Guoidnerth*, *VC* §67, c.695-710,⁸ same name as *Guaidnerth*, *Lib. Lan.* 195, c.740, *Gwaetnerth* (*CA* 799 (A), 1163 (B)). *Guēdan* alongside *Guoidan* in *VC* §56 (see §238) may belong here. The base element of that name and the first element of *Guoidnerth*, etc. (not necessarily the same element) are not certain. The sound change is dated early to mid eighth century in *LHEB* (§27. 3), though *haearn*, etc., is treated there (§40) as a separate development.

(ii) Absence of internal *i*-affection is unattested, so far as I can tell, in the *Lib. Lan.* charters. One example occurs in the *Llancarfan* material: *Catthig* < **Catusegos* in *VC*

§68 (c.650 or earlier⁶), as against *Cethig* (§65) and *Cethij* (§57), certainly and most probably, respectively, the same individual. It is possible that the Llandaff originals of the late sixth to early seventh century had had a few examples of this type which were then levelled out in copying. The sound change is dated to the seventh century in *LHEB* (§176).

(iii) Brit. [j] > [ð] is earlier than the period of the charters, as shown by the fifth-century *MONEDORIGI* < *[Monijori:gos] (*CIIC* no. 413; *LHEB* §38. A. 2). However, in *Lib. Lan.* 73a (c.585), 73b (c.595), we find the same name alternatively as *Cimmeired* and *Cimmareia*, which looks very much like Neo-Britt. [-eð] alongside its Brit. source [-eja] < [-ija:]. If so, the latter preserved a tradition which must have been very old at the time which survived by virtue of being considered the correct Latin spelling.

§4. The charter evidence is generally in accord with Jackson's chronology of \bar{o} > *au* and \bar{e} > [ui]. In *Lib. Lan.*, the latest instance of \bar{o} is c.850, but this is an isolated outlier eighty years later than the previous instance, and that previous instance is the same name, the very popular name *Merchiôn*, whose popularity may well have fostered a stereotyped spelling. Discounting these last two examples, the latest certain instance of \bar{o} is c.758. All the Llancarfan examples are older. In *LHEB* §11, the sound change is dated to the 'eighth century in general'. If so, the charters show that the older spelling went out of favour very shortly after the diphthong arose, except in a few well-established forms like *Merchiôn* and *Catôc*, *Cadôc*. This rapid changeover is as expected considering that Com.Britt. already had this sound (< Brit. [-a|w-], e.g. OB *nau* 'nine' (Ang. 477 *prima manus*), and Lat. *au*, e.g. OB *laur* 'laurel' (Leiden Leechbook)) and was spelling it *au* before the Welsh innovation.

In *Lib. Lan.*, two instances of \bar{e} for later [ui] belong to the mid eighth century, but the mass of examples are c.700 or earlier. Of the seven Llancarfan examples, the only one that I have tentatively placed in the mid eighth century is perhaps more probably an instance of the lower \bar{e} (< *ai*) which gave [oi]. The rest are earlier. Jackson puts the emergence of [ui] in the 'second half of the seventh century' (*LHEB* §28. 3), which fits more or less perfectly with the evidence reviewed here. The two later Llandaff examples can be regarded as retention of the old grapheme.

On the other hand, *Uu-* and *U-* for later *Gu-* appears to have died out before the mid seventh century. It is wholly absent from the Llancarfan series. In *LHEB* §49, Jackson states the obvious point that Welsh already had a well-established *gw-* < older *w-* by the point that contemporary manuscript remains start (late eighth century in his view). He follows with a discussion that is quite involved so that it is not altogether apparent how much older he believes the development to have been, but it seems clear that he did not have in mind a date so early as the Llandaff sequence would lead us to. It is possible that this particular archaic orthographic practice was regarded by the later copyists as especially unacceptable and therefore ruthlessly modernized more than others. But, if that was so and *Uu-*, *U-* had been vigorously in use through the seventh and into the eighth century, one must wonder why (in a chronologically disorganized collection, like *Lib. Lan.*) the old spellings slip through only in charters of pre-c.625. (If the above suggestion on *Ubelbiu*, etc., is correct, this would show that at least one copyist did not even understand old *Uu-* and therefore could not possibly have correctly modernized it to *Gu-*.) Outside the charters, a few other points indicate the earliness of the change. Jackson is right that Sir Ifor Williams's interpretation of *gu* on the Towyn inscription as an abbreviation of *gureic* is 'doubtful and hypothetical' (*LHEB* 386, n. 1;

Williams, *BWP* 29). However, that the *gu* there stands for some word with [gw-] < older [W-] is extremely likely, as Welsh has very very few words with inherited consonantal *g*- + vocalic *-u*- and the IE labiovelar **g^{wh}* seems to have first given Gall.Britt. *w* before Neo-Britt. velarized this to [gw-].¹¹ So, if the Towyn inscription is c.700, as Jackson suggests (*SC* viii/ix. 19), we then have velarization by that date.

We may also consider the Britt. loanwords by which the Gaels called themselves and their language: OIr. sg. *Goidel* corresponds to OW *Guoidel* (*Lib. Lan.* 209b, c.765, used as a personal name) and OIr. *Goidelg*, Sc.G *Gàidhlig* to MW *Gwydelec* (*Geirfa* 733). These words were borrowed into Ir. with Neo-Britt. velarization complete. I do not know the earliest example of either word in Ir., but *Goēdel* as a personal name occurs in the archaic Leinster genealogical poem, *Móen óen ó ba nóed*,¹² and the passage in question has been cited by James Carney and since by the late David Greene¹³ as an example of sixth-century verse. One can obviously not simultaneously regard Welsh velarization as an eighth-century development and have the loanword *goidel* occur in a sixth-century Ir. poem. It is possible that that particular piece of the poem (complete with *gabsus* treated as a trisyllable in *flaithi Goēdel gabsus!*) is a later interpolation, though no present-day authority known to me would date that line later than the seventh century. It is unlikely that velarization could have occurred much before the latest *U(u)*- spellings of *Lib. Lan.* because the English would have borrowed the Shropshire place-names *Wrekin* (cf. OW *Cair Guricon* 'Wroxeter', *HB* §66a) and *Wenlock* in the seventh century, though not necessarily in the middle of the century as Jackson believes (*LHEB* §49).

It is in Cornish and Breton that initial *U*-, *Uu*-, *W*-, etc., hung on much longer as standard orthographic practice. To take OB alone, *CR* shows 410 instances of *Uu*- and *U*- against 40 of *gu*- in charters older than 878; see F. Loth, *Vocabulaire vieux-breton* (Paris, 1884), 12; *LHEB* 338. *Uu*- and *Vv*- remain common in the later Cartulary of Landévennec. However, if Fleuriot's dating of the Leiden Leechbook is correct (*DGVB* 4), then *gu*- was fully established in another school of OB spelling in the late eighth century. This of course would mean that velarization was complete and that *u*-, *uu*-, *vv*-, etc., in the cartularies and other manuscripts were only graphemes for unlenited [gw-], lenited [w-]. If it is admitted that certain Breton monks were regularly writing *uu*-, etc., for [gw-] in the ninth and later centuries, there is no reason that they could not have been doing so already in the seventh and eighth, but the evidence is not adequate to decide this point. It is at least plain that in the late sixth century, Gregory of Tours shows no trace of velarization in the Britt. names preserved in *Historia Francorum*: *Vidimaclis* (§9, 18), *Winnochus* (§5, 22), *Vennocus* (§8, 34), *Warocus* (§5, 16).

§5. The various spellings for the reflexes of the Brit. prefix **com*-, **con*-, **cob*-, **co*- and the pretonic name element *cuno*- change significantly over the course of time in *Lib. Lan.* Davies's description of the distribution (*BBCS* xxviii/4, 556) is quite adequate, and, as examples are there for all to see under *C*- in the index of *Llandaff Charters*, only a few points need be added here. Of those spellings indicative of—or, at any rate, recollecting—rounding, the last example with *-o*- is *Congual*, 235a, c.900, and the last with *-u*- is *Cunhēarn*, 184, c.738. Davies treats only the forms which gave MW *Cyn*-, but her remarks apply equally to the examples which gave *Cyf*- and, in one case, *Cyff*-. Thus,

Comëreg listed above = MW *kyfwyre*, *Coffro*, 200, c.758, = MW *kyffro* 'symudiad, cychwyniad, ysgwyd, cynnwrf, movement, setting off, shaking, rousing' (*Geirfa* 222), and *Cobreidan*, 202 (same person as *Cibreithan*, 206, and other variants), c.745-75, is built on the word *cyfraith* 'law'. It is not altogether clear whether we have to do here essentially with a change of spelling or a sound change. At the roots, there is a sound change: Brit. pretonic short *i* (sometimes *e* when this was later raised to *i*) and short *u* (and *o* when this was later raised to *u*) eventually fell together as [ə], which is written *y* in Middle and Mod.W. At first sight it seems rather unlikely that the historically round vowel would come to be written *i* until it had been fully unrounded and thus fallen together as [ə] with the reflex of pretonic *i*. Since both contemporary ninth-century manuscripts and Davies's Llandaff chronology imply *i* had become the standard spelling of the reduced, historically round vowel by c.800, it would seem probable that the unrounding and falling together was achieved by then and that later cases of -*o*- (also, e.g., *Concannon* the early ninth-century Eliseg Pillar (*EWGT* 2-3) were traditional. Jackson, however, envisions a rather lengthy and multi-staged process which might not have been completed until the eleventh or even the twelfth century. As that late dating depended in large part on the belief that the -*u*- and -*o*- forms in *Lib. Lan.* reflected twelfth-century OW, it need not be retained. As Davies observed (*loc. cit.*), though the round-vowel spellings predominated in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, *Cin-* occurs at all periods. This raises the question of whether *i* in the early charters reflects an old mixed practice or the effects of later (i.e. post-c.800) copying. Here, the Llancarfan charters paint a clearer picture. In that collection, which does not go past the third quarter of the eighth century, the elements in question are seldom spelled with a front-vowel grapheme: thus, §55—*Conigc*, §56—*Conigc*, §59—*Canapoi*, *Concun*, §60—*Congalē*, §61—*Cungrat*, *Cunhapē*; §62—*Connogoi*, §63—*Conocan*, §64—*Connogoi*, *Connmil*, §65—*Connmoe*, *Connmil*, §66—*Conbelin*, *Conigc*, *Concuun*, §67—*Connmil*, §68—*Connmogoe*, *Connmil*. The -*a*- in *Canapoi*—which can be paralleled as early as Gildas's *Damnonia*—probably indicates a wholly or largely unrounded pronunciation, but the sound may have not yet altogether fallen in with the reflex of pretonic short *i* as schwa. *Canapoi* beside *Cunhapē* (the same person; pre-c.720⁵) probably represent two pronunciations rather than two spellings for schwa; cf. MW alternations such as *Manogan* (*EWGT* 38), *Mynogan* (*EWGT* 62, etc.) = OW *Minocann(us)*. *VC* §55—*Minnocioi*, §56—*Mannocoi* (a name which is perhaps related to this last *comparandum*) is the only possible example of an originally rounded, short pretonic vowel written *i* in the Llancarfan charters. Unfortunately, it is not absolutely certain what the root of this name is. But the most likely possibility is MW *mynawc*, *an-uynawc*, *an-uyynawc*, *an-uonawc* 'courteous, famous, eminent' to be compared with OB -*monoc*, *Monocan*, and OC *Conmonoc*; see *CA* p. 157. If the name in *VC* is built on this element, then -*nn-* is purely orthographic as in *anuyynawc* (which comes from *RBH*, where non-etymological doubling is common, as I.W. pointed out (*loc. cit.*)). *Minnocioi*, *Mannocoi* therefore demonstrates the possibility that the pretonic short [u] and [i] of the sixth century had fallen together before the second quarter of the eighth, this falling together being the phonetic basis of the standard practice of writing both as *i* in the ninth and tenth centuries. However, even if such was the case, the orthographic tradition whereby the old round vowels were written as round vowels must have been well established (with *com-*, *con-*, *co-*) at that time and slow to erode, at least amongst the learned men of South-east Wales.

§6. THE TOWYN INSCRIPTION

As noted above, this text has recently been dated to *c.* 700. I.W. had earlier estimated on the conservative (i.e. late) side *c.* 750 (*BWP* 25–6). These datings were based upon epigraphic rather than linguistic criteria. Palaeography will be accepted as the more exact science here, and we can at least be confident that the stone throws further valuable light upon the state of written Welsh in the pre-*c.* 800 period. Heretofore, scholars have stressed the points that the stone proves that British had become Welsh and that Welsh had become a written language before the carving was made. Presently, we shall concern ourselves with three particulars of the spelling system.

As regards the feature last considered above, a mixed practice is seen at Towyn. Sixth-century pretonic [u] is reflected by the archaic *u* in the name *Dubut(-)* (cf. Mod.W *Dyfodwg* = OIr. *Dubthach*; see Morris-Jones, *Y Cymmrodor* xxviii. 265). I.W. (*BWP* 32–3) offered the less probable explanation of the *du-* segment as OW *di*, MW *y*, *i* ‘to’ (< sixth-century **du* < Brit. **do*), but in any event that would amount to the same old spelling of the same sound. On the other hand, in the form *cimalted* (cf. OB *Comalt-car*, MW *cyfeillt*), the younger spelling *-i-*, indicative of [ə], occurs. Though Williams idiosyncratically saw the predominant sense of *alt-* as ‘join(t)’ rather than as ‘nurture’, it is beyond doubt that the first element is Brit. **com-*. The name which Morris-Jones (*Y Cymmrodor* xxviii. 261–2) read as *ciNgeN* might (as he himself noted) have a ligatured *uN* and thus read *Cungen*. Williams also saw the ligature.¹⁴ Thus, this name could possibly be added to either category as a second example.

As regards this one feature, Jackson’s dating of the inscription squares rather well with the evidence of the charters reviewed above. In *Lib. Lan.*, it was seen that the *u*-spellings died out in the early eighth century. In the Lllancarfan material—where the general flavour is of virtually no modernization of the personal-name forms—*i* [ə] < sixth-century [u] seems to make its first anomalous appearance in a document of the late seventh to early eighth century. Therefore, it is precisely in the period *c.* 700 that we might expect to find the spellings *i* and *u* coexisting.

Morris-Jones (*Y Cymmrodor* xxviii. 265), following Rhŷs, identified the name *Marciau* as a form of OW *Merc(h)iaun* missing the last letter. He concluded—presumably from the lack of internal *j*-affection and validly so—‘The language of the inscription is *pre-Old Welsh*’ (J.T.K.’s italics). In this case, the charter evidence favours Williams’s alternative, whereby *Marciau* was taken as a hypocoristic derivative of a compound name in Brit. **marco-* ‘stallion’, precisely analogous to OW *Teliau* alongside the base form *Eliud* and *Suliau* (and *Tysilio*) < OW *Sulgen* (later *Sulien*). A sixth-century Breton example *Macliavus* (*Historia Francorum*, §§4, 4; 5, 16), from a compound in Brit. **Maglo-*, shows us that OW *-au* derives here from Brit. **-awos*, not *-ā-*. The old charters prove quite clearly that the WCB reflex of *Marcianus* was written *Merc(h)iōn* (also *Merc(h)iun*) through the seventh and into the eighth century before *Merc(h)iaun* first appeared in Welsh. In other words, internal *j*-affection was far in advance of diphthongization, so there never was a period when that name was regularly written ***Marc(h)iaun*. In the case of *Catthig* (*VC* §68), lack of *i*-affection (in that case from vocalic rather than semi-vocalic *i*) appeared as a rare archaism in a document of the early to mid seventh century, which might lead us to back-date Towyn. However, the hypocoristic *Marciau* could derive from a compound without affection (e.g. *Marchudd* as

I.W. suggested) and have been influenced by this after affection had generally taken place in favourable circumstances.

It may finally be noted that the spelling of the number *petuar* '4' contrasts with *petguar* and *petguared* in the early ninth-century 'Weights and Measures' glosses (see *LHEB* 47, 387). As Davies mentions (*BBCS* xxviii/4, 556), *u* for internal [w] is most common in Llandaff charters of the seventh and eighth centuries (e.g. *Cunualet*, 150b, c.690), whereas *gu* and *ugu* were standard in the ninth and tenth centuries. The last two spellings (of which the former at least is found also internally in OB from the mid ninth century on) can be taken as secondary graphic effects of velarization. The practice probably established itself at the opening of second elements in compounds before invading root elements, e.g. *Guo-guoret* (*VC* §55).

Traces of 'pre-OW' orthography in Hengerdd

§7. Of the Welsh poetry whose subject-matter links it to the sixth and seventh centuries, all—except for portions of the *CA B* text—has been extensively normalized to varieties of MW orthography and in this way is essentially unlike the charter material surveyed above. None the less, as is well known, there are more or less frequent throwbacks to older orthography throughout. Recently, some attempts have been made to determine on the basis of such slips and anachronisms the date of the OW originals behind particular texts. Thomas Charles-Edwards examined the *B* text's use of *i* and *u* for later *y* and *w* and found that the older spelling *oi* was sometimes used for [oi] where the tenth-century Computus Fragment would write *oy* (as in MW), which leads to his suggestion of a 'ninth or eighth century manuscript' as *B*'s ultimate source (though at 'one or more removes' from the surviving text), a modest challenge to the orthodox view referred to above.¹⁵ Jenny Rowland has demonstrated that the representation of [-ŋ.h-] (< Brit. /-nc-/) by *nc* 'disappeared at least as early as c. 1000'. The old spelling clearly survives in the *Gododdin B* text: *Gododin stre stre ancat | ancat cyngor cyngor temestyl* (589-90) = A. 576-7 *Gododin ystre. ystre ragno ar anghat | angat gynghor e leuuer cat*. An original with *nc* must also underlie a mistake found in three of five surviving copies of a line belonging to the *Englynion Beddau* (*CLiH* 1. 23^b): *llu kyndrwyn* is found in *RBH* and the late copies of the lost portion of *WBRh* (Peniarth 111 and BL Add. MS 31,055), against *lv kigrun* in *LlDC* (18. 49) and *llu cyngwrwn* in NLW 4973. The last two have the correct reading, the sense being 'a tightly arrayed host'. Rowland plausibly proposes that the common source was OW *lu cincrun* (in Insular half uncials) misread as *cintrun* by one of the intermediaries.¹⁶

§8. REDEFINING TERMS, CHRONOLOGICAL STAGES

Charles-Edwards and Rowland were working within the framework of the established notion of an OW period running from c.800 to c.1150. The charter evidence and that of the Towyn inscription allow us to consider a wider span, commencing in the later sixth century. Within this expanded framework, such old designations as *Early Old Welsh* for the language of the ninth and tenth centuries become misleading, so that it is necessary to redefine the chronological stages. Since we are now considering the writing of Neo-Britt. (before the MW stage) over a period of c.550-c.1150, one might merely split the difference and call what comes before 850 *Early* and what comes after *Late*.

Such an arbitrary procedure would be unhappy in at least two obvious ways. In the first place, the ninth century, which is bisected by the mean, was a period of relative stability for the Welsh language. In fact, in modern scholarship, ninth-century OW has achieved the status of the quintessential OW, analogous to the OIr. of the previous century. Secondly, to call the written language of the seventh century *Early Old Welsh*, *Archaic Welsh*, or *Primitive Welsh* callously conceals the fact that the forms of this period—far more often than not—were indistinguishable from contemporary CB (and presumably Cumbric as well). For example, the name which became MW *Kynfawr* would have been regularly spelled *Cinmaur* in ninth-century OW, but *Conmôr* in ninth-century OCB. In the seventh century, *Conmôr* or *Cunmôr* would have been the standard spelling throughout the Brittonic world. This is an important distinction and one that the prevailing terminology conceals rather than highlights; for scholars nowadays speak of British becoming Welsh, or, attempting greater precision, becoming *Primitive Welsh*, *Primitive Breton*, etc. What British in fact became with the apocope of *c.500* (or somewhat before) was an Archaic Neo-Britt. which was well-nigh pre-dialectal, at least as far as this can be gauged from our present vantage. By the early ninth century, and probably already in the later eighth, we find a written language in use in Wales in which a short passage or list will clearly show itself on orthographic and phonological criteria to be Welsh and not CB. It is fair to call this language *Old Welsh*. On the other hand, most of the charters of *Vita Cadoci* (which belong to the seventh and early-to-mid eighth century) could, if taken out of context and the places and persons were unknown to us, be passed off as Breton. The language at this stage should be called *Common Archaic Neo-Brittonic* or simply *Common Neo-Brittonic* (herein abbreviated Com.Britt.).

§9. The two chief features which allow us to distinguish ninth-century Welsh from Breton are the writing of the Welsh innovations whereby Com.Britt. *ō* (< Brit. [a:]) was diphthongized to *au* under the ultimate accent and *e* and *i* came to stand for the formerly round, reduced pretonic vowel, both illustrated by *Conmôr* > *Cinmaur*. As was shown, both changes appeared and gained momentum in the eighth century, though not at an even pace (pretonic *o* for Medieval and Mod. *y* hung on later) and certain orthographic schools would obviously have been more traditional than others. For example, at Towyn old and pre-dialectal forms like *Dubut*(-), *Marciau*, and *petuar* were seen together with the clearly W *cimalted*, yet the early ninth-century 'Eliseg Pillar' (EWGT 1-3)—which, as a Latinate monument in the highest possible style, may have been self-consciously archaizing¹⁷—has *Concenn* (five times) and *Conmarch*, instead of *Cincenn*, *Cinmarc(h)*, but also has *Guoillauc* with OW *-auc* instead of Com.Neo-Britt. *-ōc*. So that while the eighth century in general figures as the transitional period from Com.Neo-Britt. to OW, traces of the transition can be found either side of the central watershed.

§10. Though I have gone through the entire corpus the tally given below is probably not exhaustive owing to the fact that many words and whole lines remain unintelligible to me. It must also be cautioned that, owing to the general uncertainty regarding the transmission process behind the texts and the factor of interpolation, old features need not be embedded in uniformly old contexts. What is true for one poem in *Canu Taliesin* need not be true for all twelve. The early history of particular *awdlau* in the *Gododdin* may be quite different, as

patently must be the case for the recognized interpolations. We also suffer the general disadvantage of seeing the original spelling only as errors and slips poking through texts (excepting parts of the *CA B* text) reduced to wholly different orthographic standards. The ultimate wild card in any such study is the possibility that literate poets might have made use of glossaries or quarried words from old written texts. As will be seen, there is some evidence for such practices in the works of the Gogynfeirdd.

§II. INITIAL *u-* OR *uu-* FOR LATER *gu-*, MW *gw-*

A likely example is *CA* 316 (B): *ur rwy ysgeinnyei y onn o bedryholl | llav . . .* I.W. took *ur* as an error for *in*, i.e. the OW form of *yn* the predicating particle, thereby implying a translation 'overly much, he used to scatter his ash (spears) from his hand's four clefts . . .'. Apart from the fact that the emendation and the prefixed adverbial thus derived yields weak sense, the predicating particle is rarer in the diction of the Cynfeirdd than in MW prose and especially so in the *Gododdin*. We find constructions with the particle competing with another—the older one presumably—in which a bare adjective was employed as ADV or predicate. In a number of cases, where later scribes saw the particle, it was really something else.¹⁸ With this line, it is preferable to suppose that *ur* means 'man, hero' and reflects *uur* in the original. *Rwy* is then the well-known relative form of *ry* with infixed accusative pronoun (on which see J. Strachan, *Ériu* iii (1907), 28; *L & P* §349; *GMW* §58 n.). The relative sentence as it occurred in the exemplar may be reconstructed and translated *uur ro-i scentie i onn <h>o petriholt | i lôm* 'the hero who had been wont to scatter his ash (spears) from his hand's four clefts'. I.W. preferred not to read *rwy* as relative *ry* + infix because the verb already had an object, i.e. *y onn* 'his ash' (*CA* 156). It was Henry Lewis who later recognized that the use of a proleptic infixed pronoun was a regular feature of the diction of *CA* and that OIr. *comparanda* showed this to be a Celtic inheritance (*BBCS* xiii/4, 185); therefore, *rwy* pf. + rel. + obj. is exactly what is expected here. The exemplary form underlying extant *ur* is not likely to be *Gur* or *Uur* with a faded red initial in so far as the line in question occurs in the middle of the *awdl*. As was suggested in connection with the form *Ubelbiu* for *Uuelbiu*, scribes of the OW period generally did not understand the spelling *uu-* (§204), though *uu-* persisted vigorously in the cartulary school of OB. As I.W. showed (*CA* 218), one feature of early Welsh orthography was the sporadic doubling of vowels. He cites *ceenn*, *piipaur*, *coorn* in the Oxoniensis Prior (Ox. 1) glosses of AD 820 (see *LHEB* 47 on the date), cf. also *anbiic guel* in the tenth-century Ox. 2 glosses (*LHEB* 54). Thus, one of the copyists behind the B text could have seen *uur* in his exemplar, and assumed that this mysterious word had OW sporadic doubling and therefore meant [ü:r] or [u:r] and was to be written *ur*, a form which was then opaque to subsequent copyists—if there were any—and merely retained.

CA 776 (A) *a wyar* = B *ad giuar* can be understood as deriving from a common (h)*ac* (u)*uear* 'and blood'; thus *britgue a<d> giuar sathar sanget* (B reading) 'of chequered clothing and gore a trampling was trampled'. 437 (B) *ac guich*—if this is, as it seems, *ac* 'and' + *gwyich* 'splendid'—is to be explained as a bad OW modernization of older (h)*ac* (u)*uich*; thus *guryt muihiam | ac guich fodiauc* 'he of greatest valour and splendid man of destiny'.

In *CT/PT* 1. 23, *nerthi athwlat* is found for *neirthiat gwlat* 'strengtheners of the land', presupposing *nerthiat* (u)*ulat* in the exemplar.

CT/PT II. 30 has *y wytheint* for *yg gwytheint* 'in wrath, battle', presupposing original (*h*)*i uuithen(t)*; cf. OW *i lau* 'yn llaw' (Chad 2), *i-couid* 'yng nghywydd' (Juvenius Englynion), *mi-telu* 'fy nheulu' (ibid.). In CA 285 (A) *beird byt barnant wyr o gallon* 'bards of the world judge men of heart', the object is unusually lenited in the archaic SVO construction: e.g. *byssed brych briwant barr* 'the fingers of the speckled one smash head(s)' (CA A. 611), *tyrch torrynt toruoed taleu* 'boars broke brows of brigades' (BT 77. 4-5). This may derive from a misinterpretation of original *uuir* for unlenited [Wir]. In 1142 (B), the pronoun *ef*, which is generally followed by the radical in Hengerdd, is followed by *weith*, the lenition of *gweith* 'battle', implying a misinterpretation of old (*u*)*ue(i)th* for fortis [Wejθ]; see H. Lewis, 'Cystrawennau *Canu Aneirin*', BBCS xiii/4 (1950), 186.

In at least two examples in CA, an early scribe or scribes appear to have misunderstood initial *uu-* as a variant of old *ou-*, to be modernized to *eu-*, as in MW *Eudeyrn* < OW *Outigirn*. This mistake could easily have arisen from such variant spellings as OW *Ouein*, *Yugein*, *Huweyn*, *Hurwen* and *Loumarch*, *Leumarch*, *Luuarch*, and *Lugua(r)ch*—all found in *Lib. Lan.* CA 497-8 (A) *eur ar vur caer krysgwydyat aer* = 508-9 (B) *eur ar mur caer crisguitat dair* appears to have a baffling reference to 'gold on the wall of a fortified town'. Assuming the exemplar read *uur ar mur cair criscēdiat clair* gives excellent sense: 'the hero was accustomed to attacking brilliantly against a *caer*'s wall'. That translation involves an imperfect in *-iat*¹⁹ and the archaic preposition *ar* < **are* (see CA p. 272). 140 (A) *Blaen ech-eching gaer glaer ewgei* has the archaic simplex verb *gwgei* 'used to fight' badly modernized from *uuce* through an intermediate *eucei* (cf. 300 (A) *gatlew* for *cathlew*; see CA 152). It can hardly reflect an otherwise unattested compound **eks-wik-* if *eching*, as I believe and Jackson's translation implies (GOSP 122), is a fossilized inflected dative of *ehang*, Mod. *eang* (Brit. fem. sg. **exs-angi*), retaining Brit. *eks* in composition as archaic *ech-*, not yet *eh-*, *e-*.

As shown above, the evidence of *Lib. Lan.* suggests that *u(u)-* went out of use in Wales c.625; so this point might suggest a written text of the *Gododdin* and CT/PT I and II nearly contemporaneous with the events commemorated. However, the fact that *u(u)-* persisted elsewhere in the Brittonic world means that unless we are assured that the poem was first written down in Wales or that orthographic practice in Cumbria agreed exactly with that in Wales on this point, then such an early dating can only remain tentative.

§12. *e* FOR NINTH-CENTURY *oi*, *ui*, MW *wy* [ui]

In *Marwnat Owain* (CT/PT x. 8), the honorand is called *vd llewenyd* 'lord of happiness'. As I.W. recognized, this was probably an error for *ud Llwyfenyd* 'lord of Llwyfenydd', one of Owain's hereditary territories. Such a mistake presupposes an original *iud lēmenid*, first miscopied to OW *iud leuenid*. The same mistake is found in the Urien poetry of CLIH: *Llewenid lluyd llywif* (III. 2^c) 'I shall lead the hosts of Llwyfenydd', not 'of joy'.

In CT/PT I. 7, the abstruse *cant Kynan kaffat | cas anwelet* with the hapax *anwelet* may be explained with the following reconstruction (assuming also an old insular hand in which *rs* and *ss* were easily mistaken): *cant Conan cabet | car annuēlet* 'with Cynan one has so dear a friend (gan Cynan cafwyd cār anwyed)', a perfectly suitable sentiment in the context, immediately after a list of luxurious gifts bestowed on the bard by Cynan.

In II. 6, *adwythein* (with *wôyth* in *gwyr Prydein adwythein yn lluyd*) makes better sense as a bad modernization of *ad uuethen* 'to combat' rhyming with *Pryden* 'Pictland' (gen. pl. < **Pritenon*; see *CA* 190), thus 'men of Pictland to battle in warbands'.

CA 488 (B) *kemp e lumen*, for which I.W. proposed the radical emendation *kamhunben* (an otherwise unknown compound meaning 'champion-prince'), could be more easily interpreted as containing an old spelling of MW *cwym* 'fall, collapse'. *Lumen* would be close relative of *lluman* 'flag, standard' and *llumon* 'beacon, summit, chimney' (see *CLLH* 85). Thus, the line can be read with the suitable sense—as applied to one of the slain Gododdin heroes—the fall of his standard, his banner laid low'.

The Strathcarron Interpolation (*CA* LXXIX. A = A. 78, LXXIX. B = B. 1) has three examples of confusion of *e* and *wy*. In line 974, B has what is presumably the right reading *ry gwydyn* 'who had descended' (3 pl.) where A (line 968) has gibberish *redegein*. In B, the PVB *ry* is preceded by *re*, which may be the adjective 'swift' or simply a false start, i.e. the exemplar's spelling of the PVB, to which B (or his source) then added the modernized *ry* without deleting the slip (or perhaps a second scribe failed to notice the under-dotting of an intermediary). Now, a possible old spelling for *ry gwydyn* would be *re-cēten*. A scribe's broad shot at modernizing this, while making the common confusion of Insular half uncial *c* and *t*, could result in precisely *redegein*, in which the scribe selected the wrong possibility for the grapheme *e* in each instance. It seems then that this scribe was used to the possibilities of *e* standing for either [e] or [ej], which were its most common values in ninth-/tenth-century OW spelling. He was not expecting (i) *re* for *ri*, later *ry*, as in *remedaut* (Mod. *rhyfeddod* 'wonder') in the Juvenius Englynion, (ii) *e* for [e:] > [uɪ] as in the early charters, or (iii) *e* for [i] (in spite of the rhyme in *-yn*) as in *tricit* at Towyn.²⁰ The fact that both A and B imply that their common exemplar had *re* for MW *ry*, rather than *ro* or *ru* with the original round vowel, need not mean that the exemplar must belong to the early eighth century rather than the seventh (cf. the implications of *cimalted* at Towyn and *Minnocioi* in *VC* discussed above), because the byform *re* existed for this particular proclitic already in Roman-period Gaul. and Brit.; for a collection of OCelt. forms with *re*, see Fleuriot, *ÉC* xviii (1981), 93–101.

In the following line, A has *a gwyr nwythyon* 'and/with the men of Nwython', where B has *o eir nwython* 'from the word of Nwython'. The individual in question is the *Neithon map Guipno* (= *Guipno*, see *EWGT* 10 n. 5) of the Strathclyde genealogy in Harl. 3859. *Neithon* is the equivalent of OIr. *Nechton* and Pictish *Nechton*, *Neiton*, *Naiton* (see Jackson, *GOSP* 48 n. 1, 98; *Problem of the Picts*, 145, 164) and most probably the correct form of the king's name. *Nwython* occurs elsewhere in early Welsh tradition and may be an authentic different name (see I.W., *BWP* 80–1), or it may in all cases arise from a confused interpretation of an old spelling *Nethon*, meaning [Nejθon] but thought to mean [Ne:θon] > [Nu:θon].

Since it was the *Eugein map Beli map Neithon* of Harl. 3859 (= *Hoan* in *AU* 641), and not *Neithon* himself, who defeated Domnall Brecc at Strathcarron, Williams proposed that A *a gwyr nwythyon* and B *o eir nwython* must be errors for *ac wŷr Neithon* 'and the grandson of *Neithon*'; see *BWP* 79–81. Alternatives amounting to much the same thing are *oc wŷr Neithon* 'from/by the grandson of N.' and *ag wŷr Neithon* 'with the grandson of N.' Jackson (*GOSP* 98) proposes a slightly different emendation, again involving *wŷr* 'grandson'. To get *eir* in

one copy and *gwyr* in another, one must suppose that the original had something like <h>*ac-êr* or <h>*oc-êr*, but in any event Mod. *ŵyr* must have been spelled *êr*. The fact that this interpolation found its way into eulogies of Catterick heroes shows that the scribes did not know who *ŵyr Neithon* and *Domnall Brecc* were, and it is therefore not surprising that they blundered as they did. In the B text, *Nuithon*, which is perhaps the same person and probably the same name as *Neithon*, occurs as a patronym in lines 1192, 1207.

§13. CONFUSION OF *o* AND *au*, MW *aw*

CT/PT 1. 11 *kat ymon mawr tec* can be read as Mod. *cad ym Mon fawr deg* 'battle in big, fair Anglesey' (as in I.W.'s notes), but is better as the equivalent of Mod. *cad ym Mon mor deg* 'battle in Anglesey so fair'. That would mean that a scribe saw *mor* in the exemplar and thought that this meant archaic *môr* > *mawr*.

The same error surely occurs in line 23 of *Preideu Annwfn* where *glywanawr* occurs at line end where the *prifodl* is *-or*. Here, the scribe was seeing something like *cliuant(h)or* and believed that this could mean *cliuant(h)ôr*; see Koch, *BBCS* xxxi. 87 ff.

In CA 109-12 (A), *ny chryssyws Gatraeth | mawr mor ehelaeth | e aruaeth . . .* 'no big (one) rushed to Catterick with as extensive a boast . . .', it is possible that *mawr* is simply a false start for the equative prefix *mor*, as in *mor tec* above. If so, read (less awkwardly) 'none rushed to Catterick with as extensive a boast . . .'. Again, the emendation presumes a scribe lulled into inattention modernizing a text in which *mor* most often stood for the very common adjective *mawr*.

A. 51 = CA LIV. A is a variant of B. 7 = CA LIV. B. *mawr marchogyon* in A corresponds to *mor marchauc* in B, implying an original *môr marc(h)ôc(ion)*. In what follows the texts are very divergent, but the problematical *no od* in B comes in the same position in the line as *nawd* 'protection' < **snād*- in A. If this is the same word, B's exemplar had *nood* = *nōd* with vowel doubling, on which see §11 above.

The same confusion is found in CA 930 (A), *an gelwir mor a chynnwr ym plymnwyt*, which I restore and translate *an geluîr môr ha chintor i m-plummnêt* 'he is called great and foremost in armed encounter', *mor* again persisting for *mawr*. Normally, in early Welsh, *angelwir* would mean 'we are called' (cf. *GOSP* 146), which makes poor sense here in the context of the laudation of a single hero, referred to in the singular throughout the *awdl*. To say 'he is called' in this construction, the diction of Hengerdd could employ *as gelwir* or *neu-s gelwir*. But it is clear from Ir., C, and B that the acc. masc. sg. pronoun had to start with been something like **en*²¹ and that W -s, *as*, *ys* derives from the original pl. and fem. sg. forms, **sos* and **sin*, respectively (cf. B *ho*, *he* spirantizing). *An gelwyr* would be the normal way to say 'he is called' in Middle Cornish.

The *awdlau* B. 24 = CA LI. B and B. 3 = CA LI. C are variants of one another. . . *lu | hedlilyaun | lu ineidlyaun* in the former corresponds to *llu meithlyon* in the latter. Whatever exactly this means it does show confusion of *o* and *au*. As I.W. points out in the notes, *o* for [au] in polysyllables could be either an old or late feature, but the younger monophthongized [o] is not a feature of CA's language.

I.W. suggested that *tot* in CA 749 (B), *kemre tot tarth*, could correspond to OC *tot* in *mor tot* 'Oceanum' and a Welsh element *tawd* meaning 'cyfan, entire', seen in *bluittyndaud parahaud bruydir beynit* 'for a full year he shall

prepare battle daily' (Williams, *BBCS* iv/1, 46). The source of this word is Lat. *tōtus*, -a, -um.

The difficult *guaurud* found in 1220 (B) is perhaps better taken—rather than as a compound of *gwawr* + *ruð* or *uð*—as an error for *gwo-ruð* 'gwaedlyd' (*Geirfa* 698), occurring elsewhere in the *Gododdin*. Thus translate *gnaut ar les Minidauc scuitaur trei* | *guaurud rac ut Eidin Uruei* 'it was usual that on Mynyddog's behalf shields were broken, bloody before Urfae(?) lord of Eidyn'. The error was possibly induced by a scribe not mindful of line ends and falsely perceiving some sort of rhyme between *scētōr* and *uuorud* in his exemplar.

§14. PRETONIC *o* FOR *mw y*

Anuonawc 'very courteous, refined, noble, exquisite' occurs four times in *CA*: 250 (B) . . . *e glot oed anvonawc* 'his reputation was most refined', 254 (B) *anvonawc eissyllut alltut marchauc* 'foreign horseman of most refined nature', 318 (A) *Issac anuonawc* 'I. most noble', 388 (A) *ny wnaethpwynt neuad mor anvonawc* 'never was built a hall so exquisite'. It also occurs in *BT*: *kennadeu am dodynt mor ynt anuonawc* 'messengers have come to me; they are so very courteous' (30. 24). And, we find it in the text of a poem by Cynddelw: *meirch anuonawc mynawc mawr* 'most refined stallions, refined, great' (*LIHen* 154. 14). See further *Geirfa* 27 *anuonawc* and *GPC* 88 *anfonog*. *GPC* follows I.W. (*CA* p. 157) in seeing it as the same word as *anvynawc*, which occurs a number of times in the poetry of *RBH* (577. 26, 579. 2-3, 578. 4, 578. 31, 579. 7), an intensive compound of *mynawc* 'courteous, noble', which itself occurs twelve times in *CA*; see note, *CA* 171. The suffixed stem is probably what we have in the Llancarfan witness's name *Minnocoi*, *Mannocoi* (see §5 above). This is the common OCB personal-name element *monōc* as in *Wr-monōc*, *Monōcan*, etc. (§5; *Ch.Br.* 152 f.). The original identity of *mynawc* and *-uonawc* in *anuonawc* is further suggested by the *cyrch-gymeriad* in *CA* 253-4 (B): *ardwey ei canwr arwr mynauc* | *anvonawc eissyllut alltut marchauc* 'the refined hero, foreign horseman of most courteous nature, led a hundred men'.

The verb *gomynnei* (3 sg. impf.; *CA* 26 (A)), *gomynyat* (agent noun or more probably 3 sg. impf. < middle (see note 19 below); *CA* 345 (A), 1378 (A)) 'he used to strike down' is peculiar to *CA*. In the notes (*CA* 72), I.W. recognized that it must mean essentially the same thing as the well-attested *cymynu* 'torri, break, cut, cut down, strike off' < **com* + *bi-na-*, cf. OIr. *con-ben*, B *kemener* 'tailor' = W *cymynwr* 'hewer' (*VKG* ii, §664; *L&P* §505 n.). Elsewhere in *CA* we find *pareu rynn rwygyat dygymynei e gat* 'the spears of the fierce shatterer used to hew down in battle' and *o Gatraeth o gymynat* 'from Catterick, from the place of slaughter' (*CA* 346 (A)), in which (-)gymyn- is a lenited form of *cymyn-* < **com* + *bi-na-*. I.W. derived *gomyn-* < *go* + *am* + *byn-*, a solution perpetuated by *GPC* (1459 *gomynaf*). But the derivation is unworkable: Britt. has no other example of *gom-* < Brit. **wo* + *ambi*, and **wo-ambi-bina-* would give ***gomfyn-* or ***gwemfyn-* not *gomyn-*. The preferable solution is that the three instances of anomalous *gomyn-* are errors for its well-attested synonym *cymyn-*, arising from an old written form *com(m)in-*.

Conclusions

§15. ON THE DATE OF THE ORIGINAL EXEMPLARS

Of the four features discussed in the preceding sections, *o* for *y* could be explained on the hypothesis of ninth-century exemplar (particularly early

ninth) at which time that spelling persisted in certain schools in Wales. However, *o* was completely standard throughout the Brittonic world in the seventh and eighth centuries; so such a dating becomes a somewhat stronger hypothesis. The changeover of *ō* to *au* occurred in the eighth century; so confusion of these two points to mid eighth century or earlier. *ē* gave *ui*, *oi*, *oe* somewhat earlier; so confusion of these suggests manuscripts of the early eighth century or earlier. The oldest obsolescence was that of *u(u)-* for [W-] > [gw-]. This might imply an exemplar older than c.625, but see the reservations expressed at §4. Another possible indicator of an extremely old written text of the *Gododdin* are the recurrences of *rector* scanning as *rheithur* (forming a *cyrch-gymeriad* with *gwreith*), which I discussed in my communication to the Colloquium ar yr Hengerdd held at Aberystwyth in 1984. The changeover of *-ct(-)* to *-(i)th(-)* is not evident in the *Lib. Lan.* continuum at all and is therefore probably older than c.600. A safe conclusion is that some surviving texts of the Cynfeirdd poetry rest—at some level—upon written material older than c.750.

§16. With such a revised date, the interval of preliterate transmission is reduced from the orthodox two to three centuries to a span of a century and a half down to nil. This revision naturally demands fairly fundamental rethinking of the entire transmission process, reaffirming certain views which until now have been unorthodox. In 'Iaith y *Gododdin*' (*Astudiaethau ar yr Hengerdd*, 82 ff.), Simon Evans expressed the belief that the writing down and recopying of the text had been episodes of major creative development for the *Gododdin*. At the Colloquium ar yr Hengerdd (Aberystwyth, 26 June 1984), David Dumville went somewhat further in suggesting that every change which separates the extant *CA* from the hypothetical ur-*Gododdin* of Neirin—including the profound disarray of the *awdlau* and incongruity of the variants—could have taken place on parchment. Confronting the linguistic data which imply a short to non-existent preliterate transmission, Dumville's possibility comes closer to confirmation. We can no longer suppose—if anyone ever did—that the effects of the literate transmission were merely those of self-effacing scribes seeking to modernize one word after another.

We have always known—though the fact is often lost sight of—that, in the last stages of the transmission of the Cynfeirdd poetry, books were used by the bards in preparing their oral recitations. The evidence for this practice is manifest and indisputable, seen most vividly in the famous 'advertisement' in *CA*.

Canu vn canuawc a dal pob awdyl or gododin herwyd breint yng kerd amrysson. Tri chanu a thriugeint a thrychant a dal pob vn or gwarchaneu. Sef achaws yw am goffau ene gorchaneu riuedi e gwyr a aethant e Gatraeth. Noc a dele gwr mynet y emlad heb arveu; ny dele bard mynet e amrysson heb e gerd hon. Eman weithyon e dechreu gwarchan maelderw. Talyessin ae cant ac a rodes breint idaw. Kemeint ac e odleu e Gododin oll ae dri gwarchan yng kerd amrysson. (*CA*, p. 55)

[Every *awdl* of the *Gododdin* counts for a whole poem because of its rank in a song competition. Each *gorchan* is worth 363 poems. This is because it commemorates in its *gorchanau* the number of men who went to Catterick. No more than a warrior should go to fight without arms, should a bard go to a song competition without this poem.]

The well-known rubrics found prefixed to a number of poems in *BT*—like that on p. 31: *Glas wawt Taliessin. xxiiii. a tal*, 'Glas Wawd T. which counts for 24

(points)'—must also be understood in terms of the scoring system at bardic competitions. So, as well as the generally acknowledged forms of transmission—oral, oral to written, and then written—we also see written texts going back into the oral medium of the *cerdd amrysson*. A case in point is furnished by the line of Cynddelw cited above. It is well known and immediately obvious to anyone who has read both bodies of verse that the diction of Cynddelw is much indebted to that of the *Gododdin*. When we compare his *meirch anuonawc mynawc mawr* with CA 253-4 (B) *mynauc anvonawc eissyllut alltut marchauc*, noting the shared unhistorical spelling of the second word, we see that the text known by Cynddelw was a written text—or was derived from a written text—closely related to that which survives. In fact, as far as we can tell from the internal evidence of the manuscripts themselves, the need of literate bards was the sole *raison d'être* of the Books of Aneirin and Taliesin. This was probably also the case for the copy known to Cynddelw in the twelfth century.

§ 17. At this point, we must attempt to bridge the gap of several centuries to ask the intent of those original poetic texts hypothesized for the period late sixth century to c.750, which brings us back again to the fundamental questions of how, why, and when Neo-Britt. was written in the first place.

The British church of the fifth and sixth centuries was a literate institution. A primary focus of this literacy was the study and transmission of scripture, but the efforts of early churchmen went well beyond this into more creative publications. Survivals from the latter category include Patrick's *Epistola* and *Confessio*, probably the *De vita Christiana* attributed to Fastidius, Gildas's *De excidio Britanniae*, the so-called 'Canones Wallici',²² other penitential tracts, and the 'Lorica' attributed to Gildas. From the internal historical evidence provided by the charters themselves, we can see that the early church depended for its livelihood upon aristocratic grants of income-producing property. Unlike portable and perishable property, such as valuable swords and livestock (both attested in the charters), land grants were often scattered far from the religious house itself and continued to provide income for generations, or even centuries, after the original grant. Given that, the potential for subsequent dispute of title was rife. Religious communities that were already making extensive use of writing for various purposes would quite early on and naturally have recognized the utility of keeping track of land grants in written records. In the fourth and well into the fifth centuries, two factors would have rendered it unnecessary to revise the traditional Lat./Rom.-Brit. writing system in order to keep cartularies. Syllable loss was not yet well advanced at this time, at least not in the standard language of the learned classes; so the phonemic system of spoken Britt. was still much as that for which the Rom.-Brit. spelling had been first devised. Second, to judge from the genealogies and what contemporary documents exist, Lat. names remained in vogue for the upper classes to the close of Roman rule (in AD 409-10) and somewhat beyond. But by c.500 apocope must have been complete in everyday speech and syncope moving forward, native names predominated for both clerics and land-owning classes, and what Lat. and biblical names persisted (such as *Iouann*) were most of them assimilated to Neo-Britt. phonology. At this stage, it became cumbersome to continue producing ecclesiastical records embedding numerous native names of places, dignitaries, church officials, clerical and lay witnesses in Rom.-Brit. form, which is to say with composition vowels restored, inflected Lat. case endings, and so on. Consequently, a new system for transliterating

native names was invented, which is here given the name (*Common*) *Archaic Neo-Brittonic*.

I use the word 'invented' intentionally here. Although the first Neo-Britt. writing must remain to us an anonymous invention, I believe that we must recognize it as a conscious creation, the concerted effort of some considerable intellect. The close similarity of OW and OB spelling is always remarkable; it is nowhere more striking than when we compare the orthographic earmarks of the oldest sort of spelling found in *Lib. Lan.* (where *U(u)-* had not yet given *Gu-*) with the earliest (very late eighth- to early ninth-century) charters in the Cartulary of Redon. And, if we consider how the orthographic tradition of Redon had been in the seventh and early eighth centuries, before the two long *es* had diphthongized, then we confront true identity of the spelling system employed in South-east Wales and Brittany. What we can conclude from these facts is that Archaic Neo-Britt. spelling was not passed on to posterity from its inventor or inventors in a casual or indirect manner. Rather, the mastery of this system must have been an important organized segment of the novitiate clerical scribe's obligatory training. It is significant that in Brittany it was the charter school of writing which clung in the ninth century closest to the original Common Neo-Britt. norm. The contemporary spelling systems in use in the glosses and the Leiden Leechbook stand one or more removes from the original system and have all fallen to a greater or lesser extent into innovations, eccentricities, and substandardisms absent from *CR*. In Wales, we see much the same thing: the spelling of the charters is generally more consistent and easily interpreted, as well as being more conservative, than that found at Towyn, in the Juvenius Englynion, and the Oxford glosses. What we are seeing over the course of time is a centrifugal tendency, leading to discernible degeneration in some cases, due to the isolation of regional centres and the divergence of various schools. Of course, it is this sort of development which is completely in keeping with the known history of the Brittonic peoples over the period *c.* 500–*c.* 1000. What clearly did not happen was for Rom.-Brit. spelling to slide awkwardly into Neo-Britt. more or less subconsciously at several different centres and for different local practices then to be gradually regularized and upgraded through intellectual contact.

§ 18. It is not possible to say at what centre Common Neo-Britt. spelling came into use or exactly how it then spread throughout the Brittonic world. However, the *Lives* of the British Saints repeatedly draw our attention to that criss-crossed axis which linked South-east Wales, Brittany, and the Dumnonian Peninsula during the period of the great foundations, i.e. the sixth century. The personalities of Illtud, Gildas, and Cadoc naturally come to mind as sixth-century saints whose cults (as revealed in dedications) link Gwent and Glamorgan with eastern Brittany. The last figures as a principal founder's persona for both the Llancarfan and Redon collections. One of the Abbey of Redon's chief holdings was *plebes Catoci*, Mod. *Pleucadeuc*.²³ At this time spheres of major intellectual activity must also have existed in North Wales, Cumbria, and that axis linking the British and Irish church. For the first two, we have essentially no information, but in Ireland, where a lot of early literature has survived, the fact that great cartularies like *CR* and *Lib. Lan.* are unknown may be significant.

It is seen, then, that from the later sixth century, the Britons possessed one of the factors necessary for the recording of their vernacular literature. But this in

itself was not necessarily enough: some literate individual needed a motive for recording poetry, and that same person was necessarily sufficiently clever to envision the potential for continuous text in a list of a dozen native names. There can be no doubt that this subsidiary revolution took place in parchment and ink and not on stone and, therefore, that it took place before we see its effects transferred to a new medium at Towyn c.700. The bookhand used at Towyn and ill suited to inscriptions is itself enough to tell us this. Two classes relied on heroic poetry for their survival: obviously, the bards for whom composition and transmission of poetry was their livelihood and, secondly, the warrior aristocracy itself, whose petty hereditary regimes were propagandized by the poetry. So we should be particularly mindful of any early evidence suggesting the overlap of either or both of these classes with that of the *myneich llyfr afael* ('book-keeping monks'), as they are called in the 'Marwnad Cynddylan' (line 57), the action of which belongs to the mid-seventh century. As well as the enlightened self-interest of bards and princes, we should not neglect the activities of those rare individuals who, like 'Nennius', were imbued with a nationalistic curiosity for the lore of their people. It is widely recognized that the Arthurian Battle List of *Historia Brittonum* §56 derives from a battle-listing poem like 'Trawsganu Kynan' (CT/PT I), 'Ardwyre Reget ryssed rieu' (CT/PT VII), 'Gwallawc' (CT/PT XI), and 'Marwnad Cadwallon ap Cadfan' (*Astudiaethau ar yr Hengerdd*, 34 ff.). The first of these *comparanda* contains examples of pre-OW orthographic features (as well as a number of other archaisms); so it could be that some brighter than average cleric transliterated the 'Trawsganu' in the vernacular roughly a century before the compilation of *HB* for much the same reasons that Nennius or one of his sources produced the Latinized Arthurian List.

In the better-attested period of the Gogynfeirdd, the bardic, monkish, and princely classes were clearly in close contact and not mutually exclusive. Owain Cyfeiliog provides a famous example of an individual with all three strings to his bow: hereditary chief of the district in Powys from which his traditional surname is drawn, a heroic poet of considerable skill best remembered for the 'Hirlas Owain' in which martial feats of the bard and his comrades are celebrated over the 'long-blue' drinking horn, and finally the founding patron of the Cistercian abbey of Ystrad Marchell (Strata Marcella) to which he retired in 1195; see T. Parry, *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg* (Caerdydd, 1944), 52.

§19. In the period of the historical Cynefeirdd, we possess no such detailed biographical information for any bards, rulers, or churchmen (disregarding for obvious reasons embellished hagiography). However, what little we can glean is suggestive of a society the interrelation of whose privileged classes was not to alter drastically until the final snuffing out of Welsh independence in 1282. Gildas's lengthy denunciation of Maglocunus (Maelgwn Gwynedd) in *DEB* §§33-6 provides considerable indirect information concerning the career of this individual who appears to have been the predominant ruler in Britain at c.540. He first came to the throne by force of arms but then retired to a monastery. Quoting from the edition of M. Winterbottom (*Arthurian Period Sources*, 7 (Chichester, 1978)):

Nonne in primis adolescentiae tuae annis avunculum regem cum fortissimis prope-modum militibus . . . (§33) Nonne postquam tibi ex voto violenti regni fantasia cessit,

cupiditate inlectus ad viam revertendi rectam, diebus ac noctibus id temporis, conscientia forte peccaminum remordente, de deifico tenore monachorumque decretis sub dente primum multa ruminans, dein popularis aurae cognitioni proferens, monachum sine ullo infidelitatis . . . (§ 34)

He then left the monastic life, returning to the throne by force.

Spernuntur namque primae post monachi votum inritum inlicitae licet, tamen propriae coniugis praesumptivae nuptiae, aliae expetuntur non cuiuslibet relictas, sed viri viventis, non externi, sed fratris filii adamatae. Ob quod dura cervix illa, multis iam peccaminum fascibus onerata, bino parricidalis ausu, occidendo supra dictum uxoremque tuam aliquamdiu a te habitam, velut summo sacrilegii tui culmine de imis ad inferiora curvatur. Dehinc illam, cuius dudum colludio ac suggestionem tantae sunt peccatorum subitae moles, publico et, ut fallaces parasitorum linguae tuorum conclamant, summis tamen labiis, non ex intimo cordis, legitumo, utpote viduatam, nostrae vero sceleratissimo adscivisti conubio. (§ 35)

In the most famous passage of the denunciation of Maglocunus, Gildas condemns the king's depraved sycophants.

Arrecto aurium auscultantur captu non dei laudes canora Christi tironum voce suaviter modulante neumaque ecclesiasticae melodiae, sed propriae, quae nihil sunt, furciferorum referto mendaciis simulque spumanti flegmate proximos quosque roscidaturo, praeconum ore ritu bacchantium concrepante . . . (§ 34)

It has long been recognized that we here have reference to the court bards of Maglocunus in their normal cultural role as propagandists for their patron.²⁴ Gildas's two attacks on the words of Maglocunus' courtiers—first in the 'foaming phlegm' passage and then in connection with the proclamation of the legitimacy of his second marriage—carry an implied recognition of the effectiveness of the bardic 'broadcast media' of the sixth century. Gildas could not undermine the reputation of the king without simultaneously undermining the 'propaganda machine' that had been its architects, thereby piercing the standard conceit that bardic praise was objective and heartfelt. Of course, Gildas cannot be taken as an objective commentator either, so that in assessing the character of the most powerful prince of his age, it would be good if we could screen out the bias of the one-dimensional misanthrope through whose eyes we see him. It is the complexity of Maglocunus' character which comes through the haze of the diatribe most clearly—one-time monk but warrior aristocrat *par excellence*. His initial rise and subsequent return to power appear to have hung on equal parts of military prowess and Machiavellian liquidation of key individuals. And he made skilful use of his court poets as instruments of his policy. In a kingdom bloated by fresh conquests, plenty could be found to attract the best praise-poets of the day. For us, the relevant point is that Maglocunus had the motives, resources, education, and cunning needed to sponsor or undertake on his own the writing of vernacular poetry; for he moved in the same three worlds as did Owain Cyfeiliog six and a half centuries later. The main argument that he did not sponsor or undertake written literature is the negative one that panegyrics to Maelgwn Gwynedd have not survived in medieval manuscripts. Cunedda (Mod. Cunedda), the patriarch of the Gwynedd line, is celebrated in a *marwnad* in *BT* which—though quite obscure and linguistically archaic—is not likely to be contemporary with that chieftain who flourished c.400. The Cadwallon poems (*Astudiaethau ar yr Hengerdd*, 25 ff.), concerned with early seventh-century events, are the oldest Gwynedd verse

likely to be authentic. This may be an accident of survival—Maelgwn's malodorous reputation as derived from Gildas might have been enough to discourage latter-day clerical copyists—or it may indicate that written Neo-Britt. had not yet achieved general currency in the first half of the sixth century.

§20. We may turn finally to the career of another individual, Run map Urbeghen (Mod. Rhun mab Urien), who flourished in the early seventh century. His father was the Urien Rheged who was subject of eight of the twelve poems of *Canu Taliesin* and of the fifty-nine *englynion* of *Canu Llywarch Hen* III. His brother therefore was the Owein ap Vryen eulogized in *CT/PT* x. In *HB* §63, it is said that Run baptized Edwin of Northumbria and many of his people, and one family of manuscripts of *HB* accordingly equate Run with Paulinus *Eboracensis archiepiscopus*. *AC*, under the year 626, agrees: 'Etguin baptizatus est, et Run filius Urbgen baptizavit eum.' Run figures again in *HB* at the close of the genealogy of the Northumbrian kings (§57), where it is said, 'Osguid autem habuit duas uxores, quarum una vocabatur Rieinmelth [Mod. *rhiaïn* 'maiden' < 'queen' + *mellt* 'lightning'] filia Royth, filii Run.' The rubric of the idiosyncratic and fragmentary Chartres MS of *HB* reads, 'incipiunt exberta fil. Urbacen', thus attributing the compilation to Run rather than to Nennius. It has long been believed, therefore, that Run must have been the compiler of an earlier pre-Nennian *Historia* which was later used by Nennius but is reflected directly in the Chartres MS, though as garbled and truncated as the Chartres rubric is, it seems possible that the original ascription was to some 'discipulus Run filii Urbagen' or the like. It is seen then that the son of the single most celebrated warrior-king (also brother of another major figure) of the Cynfeirdd poetry became an important churchman in the early seventh century and was in some way connected with the pre-Nennian genesis of *HB*. It is also apparent that he (or perhaps his hypothetical *discipulus*) had a nationalistic interest in native Brittonic history. Assuming that the prototype of *HB* §63 had a unitary author, it is significant that this writer was interested in presenting both Run and his father in a highly favourable, partisan light, as in the following well-known passage.

Contra illum quattuor reges, Urbgen, et Riderch Hen, et Guallauc, et Morcant, dimicaverunt. Deoderic contra illum Urbgen cum filiis dimicabat fortiter. In illo autem tempore aliquando hostes, nunc cives vincebantur, et ipse conclusit eos tribus diebus et tribus noctibus in insula Metcaud et, dum erat in expeditione, jugulatus est, Morcanto destinante pro invidia, quia in ipso prae omnibus regibus virtus maxima erat instauratione belli.

Not far away in the surviving *HB* text, in §62, which is part of the same 'Northern History' segment, the famous passage about the Cynfeirdd occurs.

Tunc Talhaern Tataguen in poemate claruit; et Neirin, et Taliessin, et Bluchbard, et Cian, qui vocatur Gueinth Guaut, simul uno tempore in poemate Brittanico claruerunt.

So it is likely that it was the same early writer who was interested in Urbgen and Run who was also interested in the native poetry of the period. With a little imagination, it would be possible to make a great deal of this—even bringing in the Arthurian battle list (*HB* §56). But much more work needs to be done on *Historia Brittonum* before we can isolate, date, and attribute its individual strands, as scholars did too boldly in the past. For now, it must be sufficient to

say that the developments which brought the royal family of Rheged into a prominent position in the church and thence into history are of the same sort—and conceivably the very same events—that led to the first writing down of the poetry of Taliesin and Neirin.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following comprise only those abbreviations which might cause difficulty and are used neither in D. S. Evans's *Grammar of Middle Welsh (GMW)* nor in Jackson's *Language and History in Early Britain*.

BWP	<i>The Beginnings of Welsh Poetry: Studies by Sir Ifor Williams</i> , ed. R. Bromwich (2nd edn., Cardiff, 1982).
DAG	<i>The Dialects of Ancient Gaul</i> , J. Whatmough (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970).
DGVB	<i>Dictionnaire des gloses en vieux breton</i> , L. Fleuriot (Paris, 1964).
Elfen Ladin	<i>Yr Elfen Ladin yn yr Iaith Cymraeg</i> , H. Lewis (Caerdydd, 1943).
EWGT	<i>Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts</i> , P. C. Bartrum (Cardiff, 1966).
Geirfa	<i>Geirfa Barddoniaeth Gynnar Gymraeg</i> , J. Lloyd-Jones (Caerdydd, 1931–63).
GOSP	<i>The Gododdin: The Oldest Scottish Poem</i> , K. H. Jackson (Edinburgh, 1969).
GPN	<i>Gaulish Personal Names</i> , D. E. Evans (Oxford, 1967).
HPB	<i>A Historical Phonology of Breton</i> , K. H. Jackson (Dublin, 1967).
LIDC	<i>Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin</i> , ed. A. O. H. Jarman and E. D. Jones (Caerdydd, 1982).
VC	<i>Vita Cadoci in VSB</i> .
VSB	<i>Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae</i> , A. W. Wade-Evans (Cardiff, 1944).

1. As David Dumville quite forcefully pointed out at the Colloquium ar yr Hengerdd (Aberystwyth, 26 June 1984).

That the alternative is at least possible was recently implied by Sims-Williams, 'Gildas and Vernacular Poetry', *Gildas: New Approaches*, ed. M. Lapidge and D. Dumville (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1984), 172. He points to the evidence that *llyfrawr* < Lat. *librārius* is used of a popular seer in *AP* 193 (cf. also *lyfyrion* in *R* 1054. 17) and *librarius* itself has the same sense in the Life of St Samson, which relates to events of the mid sixth century and could be as old as the early seventh (*LHEB* 40), suggesting that vernacular poets of the period used books. The question is whether the semantic shift 'librarius' > 'poet' took place in a Britt. or Lat. cultural environment.

2. *CIIC* no. 334, belonging to the late sixth or seventh century; see *LHEB* §9; *BWP* 21; K. Jackson, 'Some Questions in Dispute about Early Welsh Literature and Language', *SC* viii/ix (1973–4), 18–19.

3. *CIIC* no. 970, traditionally dated c.625, though perhaps later in that century; see *BWP* 11; L. Alcock, *Arthur's Britain* (Harmondsworth, 1971), 244–5.

On the name, cf. Narbonensian Gaulish *Catumandus* (*DAG* no. 80, *GPN* 173).

4. *An Early Welsh Microcosm: Studies in the Llandaff Charters* (London, 1978); *The Llandaff Charters* (Aberystwyth, 1979).

5. None of the individuals named in this charter occurs elsewhere in the cartulary. Its consistent spelling of [e:] > [ui] as *e* would suggest a date before the main sequence. *Herbic* who is listed with the clerical witnesses, though perhaps ambiguously so, and appears as a hereditary landowner in the narrative might be the same person as the *Eruic filius Guruodu regis Ercycg of Lib. Lan.* 161, 162a, c.610–15 and/or *Erbic*, 121, c.600.

6. In §61, *Paulus abbas Nantcaruan* occurs along with *Gnouan clericus. Gnouan abbas altaris Catoci*, who is presumably the same as the latter, occurs in *Lib. Lan.* 180a, c.720. *VC* §61 and §59 (where *Paulus abbas Nantcarban* recurs) must date from the period before Gnouan succeeded Paul. The *Gnauan* who figures in *VC* §11 as a contemporary of Cadoc would be another individual or corrupt tradition.

7. *Eudocē episcopus* of §65 was active, according to Davies, c.650–98. *Cethig prepositus altaris sancti Docgwini* in §65 = *Catthig* (§68) would be the predecessor of *Eutigirn abbas Docguinni* of *Lib. Lan.* 140, 143, 144, c.650–60, who is probably the *Outegurn clericus* of §68. *Iacob abbas (altaris sancti Cadoci)* of §§65, 68 appears in *Lib. Lan.* 140, 143, 144, c.650–60. *Biunō de familia Eltuti* (§65) = *Beuonoe* (§68), etc., is the same person as *Biun abbas Ittuti*, *Lib. Lan.* 144, c.650, evidently the predecessor of *Catgen* who appears in the clerical lists of §§65, 68 and is abbot of Llantwit in *Lib. Lan.* 140, 143, 147, c.650–65.

8. §67 records the same grant as *Lib. Lan.* 180b, which Davies dated c.710. The witness list in *VC* therefore involves some chronological difficulties probably due to interpolation: *Biunoi* and *Connil* were active in the mid seventh century and are not found in *Lib. Lan.* 180b.

9. In §64, three mid-seventh-century personalities—*Connil*, *Biunoi*, and *Caŷen*—co-occur with *Marcant* (who might be the *Morcant rex* of §62, dated c.665–710 in the Llandaff sequence) and *Guengarth alumnus Morcant (regis)* who is also c.665–710 in *Lib. Lan.* 147, 148, 156, 180b.

10. §62 includes *Morcant rex* and *Guengarth alumnus Morcant*, both of whom Davies dates c.665–705, also *Sulien clericus* who would be the *Sulgen* abbot of Llancarfan c.670–705 of the Llandaff sequence. *Gurhitir laicus* here perhaps corresponds to *Gurhitir laicus* of *Lib. Lan.* 176a, 190b, c.705, and/or *Gurhytyr hereditarius* of *Lib. Lan.* 148, c.688. *Danōc clericus* here is presumably the *Danōc abbas Carhani uallis* of *Lib. Lan.* 179c, c.722, before his elevation.

11. Cf. Gaul. *uediui-mi*, which I believe means 'gweddiad i, I beseech' (< IE **g^{wh}hedhjo*) and the OB personal name *Uurmhaelon* 'having brown brows'; see W. Cowgill, 'The Etymology of Irish *guidid* and the Outcome of **g^{wh}* in Celtic', in *Lautgesetz und Etymologie*, ed. M. Mayrhofer (1980), §§28–9.

12. *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, i, ed. M. A. O'Brien (Dublin, 1962), 10; K. Meyer, *Über die älteste irische Dichtung*, i (Berlin, 1913), 10.

13. Carney, 'Three Old Irish Accentual Poems', *Ériu* xxii (1971), 56; Greene, 'Y Dail a'r Bôn', in *Bardos: Penodau... cyflwynedig i J. E. Caerwyn Williams*, ed. R. G. Gruffydd (Caerdydd, 1982), 181.

14. *BWP* 34–5. Williams's reading, *cuNbeN* 'Cun wife', is problematical, and I know of no subsequent authority who has followed it rather than going back to Morris-Jones's. In the first place, I.W. is completely alone in seeing *b* rather than *g* on the stone. His *comparanda* for the supposed simplex woman's name *Cun* do not work phonologically. On the other hand, the Welsh name *Cynien* < **Cunogenos* is well attested (see *Y Cymmrodor* xxviii. 262). Though an example of the Common Celt. word for 'woman' in Early W would be a fine thing to have, the combined testimony of WCB clearly shows that the Com. Britt. word for 'wife' was already *[Wreg] (< Brit. *[Wrakū:]) in the Migration Period. It seems generally unlikely that one such short funerary inscription would contain three disrelated words for 'wife', as I.W. supposed.

15. 'The Authenticity of the *Gododdin*: An Historian's View', *Astudiaethau ar yr Hengerdd*, 50–1.

16. 'An Early Old Welsh Orthographic Feature', *BBCS* xxix/3 (1981), 513–20.

17. Forms collected by Jackson (*LHEB* §202. 2. c) show that *o* for later *y* hung on sporadically, especially in inscriptions, to c.1000. It should be borne in mind that many of his examples—such as seventh-century entries from the *Annales Cambriae*, charters in *Lib. Lan.* and Chad, and forms from *HB*—are certain or likely to be copies of older material.

18. e.g. the confusion over the old intensive *enwir* < Brit. **ande-wīros*: *CA* 771 (B) *enwir ith elwir od giuir guereit* = 736 (B) *enwir yt elwir oth gywir gverit*, 737 *kewir yth elwir*. The source is a Brit. **andewiros*, adv. **andewirū*; cf. Rachel Bromwich, *Astudiaethau ar yr Hengerdd*, 157–8 and note 12, and the examples *meibyon Godebawc gwerin enwir* (*CA* 134), *enwir rwyf bedyd* (*CT/PT* 11. 5); cf. *annwogawn* 'very glorious' (~*gogoniant* 'glory'), *BT* 66. 12, 66. 13, 52. 21, R 578. 18 *annwogawn* (Lloyd-Jones, *Geirfa* 33), *mynawc* 'refined' < **monōc*, *anuonawc* 'very refined' (see below).

19. It is my view, as I hope to show in print shortly, that the *Gododdin* contains several occurrences of this ending which have heretofore been mistaken for agent nouns; e.g. I translate 344 (A) *mal baed coet trychwn trychyat* as 'like a wild boar he was wont to hew down thirty men'.

20. A has more or less the same mistake in the last line of the *awdl* with *dywynwal a breych* against B's correct *dyuynwal vrych*, i.e. *Dyfnwal Frych* = OIr. *Domnall brecc*. The ultimate exemplar presumably read something like *Dumnuall Brech*.

21. Or, less probably, **in*. See Pedersen, *VGK* §502; *L&P* §358. Morris-Jones (*WG* 281) derived MW -y- < **i* < **en* < **em*. Thurneysen (*GOI* §358) allowed both **in* and **en* as possibilities, seeming to favour the former. More recently, Calvert Watkins has argued for Common Celtic **en* < IE **em* ('The Celtic Masculine and Neuter Enclitic Pronouns', *ÉC* xii/1 (1968–9), 92–5).

22. More correctly *Excerpta de libris Romanorum et Francorum*, in *The Irish Penitentials*, ed. L. Bieler (Dublin, 1963), 136–59. See further L. Fleuriot, 'Un fragment en latin de très anciennes lois bretonnes armoricaines du vi^e siècle', *ÉC* xiii/1 (1972), 194–212.

23. See E. G. Bowen, *Saints, Seaways and Settlements* (Cardiff, 1977), 93 ff., 177 ff. *et passim*.

24. Three recent treatments of this passage from this standpoint are A. O. H. Jarman, *The Cynfeirdd* (1983), 1–3, and J. E. Caerwyn Williams, 'Gildas, Maelgwn and the Bards', in *Welsh Society and Nationhood: Historical essays presented to Glanmor Williams*, ed. R. R. Davies *et al.* (Cardiff, 1984), 19–34; Sims-Williams in *Gildas: New Approaches*, 169 ff.